

PROLOGUE

Contractors on the Battlefield (a Notional Scenario)

US Central Command alerted the Third US Army (the Army Service Component Command for US Central Command) for another contingency mission as part of a coalition force going into Eastern Africa. Although the operation was primarily peacekeeping in nature, there was a possibility that the situation could develop into open hostilities. This type of operation was not new to the command, they had seen similar action in Somalia and Angola. Because of their past experience, the Third Army's planning staff had developed plans to handle a wide variety of operations, including this newest one in Africa. However, the combatant commander's campaign plan provided for a lean military force to accomplish the mission, requiring his staff to do some creative planning to achieve the right mix of combat and support forces to include the military-to-civilian mix.

The nature of the operation required that the force structure be combat heavy. For the staff, this meant that some of the support force structure would be delayed in deploying, and in some cases left behind. Support requirements, however, still had to include a significant theater force opening package. This package was to execute the aerial port of debarkation and reception, staging, and onward movement support operations as well as to perform the other support functions necessary to support the deployment and begin sustaining the force.

As planning proceeded, it was determined that the US Army Materiel Command's logistics civil-augmentation program umbrella contract was the best option to assist the military early-entry modules and theater force opening package units to operate the aerial port of embarkation and forward support bases, upgrade facilities for long-term occupation, construct base camps, and perform minor construction missions as required. Because of the infrastructure in the region, external support contractors from Egypt could perform several of the supply and transportation functions and provide most of the communications support. These considerations would eliminate the need to deploy a transportation battalion, most of the water purification assets, and most of a signal battalion. Assistant Secretary of the Army for Logistics, Acquisition, and Technology program executive officer/manager system contractors would also be required to provide forward maintenance and technical assistance for many of the Army's latest weapon and battle command systems found throughout the force. Supported units, therefore, needed to ensure that they deployed with sufficient contract administration support to monitor contract performance, which in some cases would be unit personnel.

Although Third Army had used contractors in its past operations, it had never experienced the size and diversity of the contractor presence that was expected for this operation. Planners recognized, because of the scope of the operation and the size of the geographical area involved, that there was a need to have visibility and accountability of contractor employees. Fortunately, Third Army had instituted a program of tracking contractor visibility in accordance with established doctrine. Using many of their primary and special staff members with assistance from the major support units who would be utilizing systems and external contractor support, Third Army was able to identify the contractor employees who would be deploying with them to support this operation. Additionally, direct links to the appropriate contracting organizations for the system contractors through the staff, major support

commands, and Army Materiel Command's Logistics Support Element, had been established to ensure theater-specific requirements were added to all contracts.

The Third Army commander directed that all contracts in support of the operation include command directives covering conduct and discipline of contractor employees in the area of operations, and safety and security requirements. The Third Army commander also directed that contractors deploying with the force be integrated into the time-phased force and deployment data as well as receive the requisite predeployment training and processing. This predeployment training and processing would be accomplished at the force-projection platform installations for contractor employees deploying with their habitually supported units and at the designated continental United States replacement centers for those employees deploying as individual replacements. The exception to this policy would be the logistics civil-augmentation program contractor who, because of this program's size and need to be in the area of operations early, would self-deploy and perform its own employee predeployment processing. Although self-deploying, the logistics civil-augmentation program contractor information was still required to be entered into the time-phased force and deployment data, and arrival slots for its aircraft and vessels had to be obtained. Finally, the Third Army commander directed the staff to plan for the operational (facilities, government-furnished equipment and services, and transportation) and life support (including billeting, messing, and medical) required by the contractors supporting the operation.

The essential nature of much of the contractor-provided support and the hostile threat to their operations required that the Third Army commander have his staff conduct a formal assessment of the risks involved in using contractors. The risk assessment included contingency plans to continue essential services provided by contractors through alternate sources (military, Department of the Army civilians, host-nation support, or another contractor) should contractor support become unavailable.

After completing this risk assessment, the staff concluded that the potential conditions of the operational environment posed a medium threat to contractors, but contractor involvement in the operation was critical. To mitigate the risk, the Third Army commander directed that contractors comply with all command safety and security directives and procedures and instructed that the directives be provided to the supporting contracting organizations to ensure that contracts were written to include these or equivalent provisions. Furthermore, military forces would protect contractor operations and movements in those areas where the threat of hostilities was likely, recognizing that the advantageous additional capabilities provided by contracted support may be offset by the diversion of some combat power to protect them. The commander also directed that deployed contractor employees would reside on military compounds. This would assist with security and limit competition for facilities. In accordance with combatant commander policy, the Third Army commander did not authorize the issue of sidearms by contractor employees. Because of these security measures, contractor employees would be permitted to operate in any area that their support was required.

As a result of the decision briefing on the operation, the Third Army commander approved the plans presented by his staff, including a detailed contractor integration plan. This contractor integration plan was put together by the G-3, but was based on information provided mostly by the other primary and special staff members. The Third Army commander then directed that this plan be included as an annex of the OPORD and gave additional guidance to ensure that this annex was read and followed by the various contracting activities supporting the operation.

Finally, the Third Army commander acknowledged the critical need for contractors to support this particular operation and requested that commanders at all levels provide an orientation for

Prologue

their soldiers covering contractors and their relationship to the military forces. "After all," he stated, "contractors have been supporting our forces throughout its history and will continue to do so; we just need to get better at integrating these valued members of our support team into to the overall plan."